



**Letter and Package  
BOMB  
Detection Techniques**


**Department of the Treasury**  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

## **Detecting Suspicious Packages / Letters**

# **\*REMEMBER\***

**The item does not have to be delivered by a carrier. Most bombers set up and deliver the bomb themselves.**

- 1. If delivered by carrier, inspect for lumps, bulges, or protrusions, without applying pressure.**
- 2. If delivered by carrier, balance check if lopsided or heavy sided.**
- 3. Handwritten addresses or labels from companies are improper. Check to see if the company exists and if they sent a package or letter.**
- 4. Packages wrapped in string are automatically suspicious, as modern packaging materials have eliminated the need for twine or string.**
- 5. Excess postage on small packages or letters indicates that the object was not weighed by the Post Office.**

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6. No postage or non-canceled postage.
  7. Any foreign writing, addresses, or postage.
  8. Handwritten notes, such as: "To Be Opened in the Privacy of" "CONFIDENTIAL" - "Your Lucky Day is Here" - "Prize Enclosed".
  9. Improper spelling of common names, places, or titles.
  10. Generic or incorrect titles.
  11. Leaks, stains, or protruding wires, string, tape, etc.
  12. Hand delivered or dropped off for a friend packages or letters.
  13. No return address or nonsensical return address.
  14. Any letters or packages arriving before or after a phone call from an unknown person asking if the item was received.
  15. If you have a suspicious letter or package,

**Call:**

**911-ISOLATE-EVACUATE**





## **Bombs**

**Bombs can be constructed to look like almost anything and can be placed or delivered in any number of ways. The probability of finding a bomb that looks like the stereotypical bomb is almost nonexistent. The only common denominator that exists among bombs is that they are designed or intended to explode.**

**Most bombs are homemade and are limited in their design only by the imagination of, and resources available to, the bomber. Remember, when searching for a bomb, suspect anything that looks unusual. Let the trained bomb technician determine what is or is not a bomb.**

**For Further Information  
about the Bureau of Alcohol,  
Tobacco and Firearms  
(ATF), call one of the  
following numbers:**

**Arsons Contact:  
1-888-ATF-FIRE**

**Explosives Incidents  
Contact:  
1-888-ATF-BOMB**

**ATF Arson &  
Explosives Division  
Washington, DC  
(202) 927-7930**

**ATF P 3320.5 (8/96)**

**ATF CAN ASSIST IN THE FOLLOWING  
AREAS:**



**National Response Team**



**Explosives Technology  
Support**



**Forensic Laboratory Support**



**Explosives - Detecting  
Dogs**



**Drug-Related Initiatives**



**Criminal Investigative  
Analyses**